826 admiration for the whiteness of my skin, not for its softness, for in this respect they could not be surpassed. My camarada Daniel, a northern Brazilian who was almost as dark as they were, did not
151 attract as much attention. The skin tone they consider most at-
826 tractive, however, must not seem to them as remote from their own color as it seems to us, for they characterized their own skin exactly as they did mine, with the terms chinga and typiánia, both of which mean "white." Whether these Tapirapé words differ in
[196] scope from our own term for "white," or whether the yearning for the ideal makes the Indians appear to themselves as lighter than they actually are, this is in any case a prime example of the possibility of broad differences in the conceptualization of such seemingly concrete phenomena and shows the researcher the desirability of comparing, whenever possible, his own observations with the information provided by the Indians.

Other native peoples of South America also prefer white skins.
171 Fritz Krause (2, 185) writes: "The ideal of the Karajá is the
826 whitest skin possible; they prized my white complexion very highly, and they themselves wished to be quite white (cf. the role of white people in their myths)."

In 1663, Simão de Vasconcellos (LX) wrote that the Indians of Brazil told the Portuguese their own ancestors had been "people of white complexion," and when they were asked why they had not remained white, they answered (LXI): "Let us make an experiment: exchange your clothing for ours, and go about naked in the sun and in the rain, as we do; and you will soon see that [105:83] you have turned from white to our own hue." Consequently, just as according to the words of the Tapirapé there is no difference between their color and mine, the Indians to whom Vasconcellos is referring clearly stated that they regarded their own skin as basically identical to that of the Portuguese.

Not only do forest Indians, such as the Tapirapé, and river Indians, such as the Karajá, prefer white complexions, but so do savanna Indians, such as the Toba. In the universal conflagration myth of this Chaco tribe, only one man survived the fire that destroyed the entire earth. "But there was no woman. Then they lowered down from the sky a woman tied to a rope, and they cut the rope from above when the woman was close to the earth. Because they cut it very close to the ground, she came out ugly, but